

Message Text

SECRET

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14

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 201015Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 559

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 2446

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: KAGNEW FOUR

REF: ROME 15125 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY ITALIAN COMMENTS REPORTED
REFTEL. WHAT WAS INITIATED BY USG AS SIMPLE EXERCISE IN
PASSING CAREFULLY CIRCUMSCRIBED MESSAGE TO ELF/PLF SEEMS
RECENTLY TO HAVE BALLOONED INTO MULTIPLE ITALIAN CONTACTS
WITH ERITREANS GIVING LATTER (AND PERHAPS FORMER) IMPRESSION USG
PREPARED "NEGOTIATE" (PARA 5 REFTEL) FOR RELEASE KAGNEW 4. WE
ASSUME EMBASSY ROME DOING WHAT IT CAN TO RESTRAIN SUCH LATIN
EXUBERANCE. REFTEL STRONGLY SUGGESTS LETTERS ENROUTE WERE
OBTAINED BY ITALIAN EMBASSY CAIRO RATHER THAN, AS INDICATED
ROME 14794, FROM ITALIANS IN KHARTOUM. THIS CONNECTION, BELIEVE
THERE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALIAN INTELLIGENCE ATTACHED EMBASSY
CAIRO BUT APPARENTLY NONE HERE.

2. FOR WHATEVER GOOD IT CAN ACCOMPLISH, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE
LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN CONTACTING LOCAL ELF/PLF REPS HERE
SHOULD DEPT SO INSTRUCT. LETTERS NOW ENROUTE THIS EMBASSY THUS
NOT NEEDED FOR SUCH A PURPOSE. MOREOVER, WE DOUBT WHETHER WOLDE
MARIAM HAS REAL CONTROL OVER PLF MILITARY INSIDE ERITREA,
WHO ARE THOSE HOLDING CISCO 2, MUCH LESS OVER ELF WHO HOLD-
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ING KAGNEW 2. FOR EMBASSY TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN DELIVERING

LETTERS MIGHT THUS APPEAR GIVE UNNECESSARY RECOGNITION TO MEMBERS OF PARTICULAR ERITREAN FACTION WHO HAVE NEITHER THEM-SELVES COME FORWARD HERE TO CONTACT US, IN RESPONSE TO DEPT'S CAREFULLY DRAWN INITIATIVE, NOR WOULD BE LIKELY TO BE OF MUCH HELP IN SPRINGING HOSTAGES.

3. WHAT WOULD SEEM REQUIRED AT THIS STAGE, PURSUANT TO PLF'S ORIGINAL POSITIVE RESPONSE VIA ITALIANS, IS PROMPT ACTION BY PLF TO CONTACT US IN KHARTOUM. ROME'S REPLY TO DEPT'S QUERY ON THIS PRECISE POINT (STATE 244072) NOT SO FAR RECEIVED HERE. UNLESS ITALIANS ABLE EXERT TANGIBLE INFLUENCE ON PLF TO CONTACT US HERE, CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT GOI COULD RISK SPINNING OUT THE PRE-LIMINARIES BEFORE A CONTACT IS MADE WITH CONCOMITANT OPPORTUNITY FOR MULTIPLE DIVERSIONARY PLOYS BY VARIOUS SELF-INTERESTED ERITREANS. SINCE DEPT'S ORIGINAL MESSAGE OF OCT 9 (STATE 240695) HAS APPARENTLY REMOVED FOR PRESENT ANY THREAT OF EXECUTION, URGENCY OF USG ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH ANY BUT THOSE ERITREANS WHO HAVE POWER TO RELEASE HOSTAGES WOULD APPEAR REDUCED. ESTABLISHMENT SOME DIALOGUE WITH PLF HERE, PLUS CONTINUATION GOS GOOD OFFICES (NOTABLY RE ELF; KHARTOUM 2442) SEEM FROM HERE MOST LIKELY AVENUES TO ACHIEVE SOME DEGREE EARLY MOVEMENT ON CASE.

4. SINCE EMBASSY COULD INITIATE DIALOGUE WITHOUT "STRANGE MANEUVER" REPORTED REFTEL, WE PROPOSE TAKE NO ACTION UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTED. BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID ANY STEP WHICH MIGHT BE VIEWED AS CONFERRING PARTICULAR STATUS OR PRIDE OF PLACE ON ANY OF THE MUTUALLY SUSPICIOUS ERITREAN FACTIONS UNLESS BY SO DOING WE CAN FREE OUR CITIZENS.

5. WE ASSUME THAT, IF EMBASSY CONTACTED SEPARATELY BY ELF AND PLF REPRESENTATIVES, WE ARE AUTHORIZED PASS USG MESSAGE CONTAINED STATE 240695 TO BOTH, SINCE AMERICAN HOSTAGES APPEAR TO BE DIVIDED BETWEEN TWO GROUPS.

BREWER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

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